

GURPS[®]

Fourth Edition

ACTION ADVENTURE[™] **1**

TEMPLAR'S GOLD[™]



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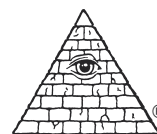
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*Through the black mist, they ride
Knights Templar – Arise!
– Cathedral, “Night of Seagulls”*

INTRODUCTION

Templar's Gold is a pulp-era adventure for use with the **GURPS Action** series. It begins with a group of adventurers gathered to honor the request of a dying friend. From there, the party is thrown into a race against nefarious forces to find a lost treasure, which leads them into a dangerous, battle-scarred region called the *Zone Rouge*.

To play this adventure, it helps to know a bit about the Knights Templar, a legendary militant order shrouded in mystery. Once the pride of Christendom and the shock troops of the Crusades, King Philip IV of France had the order arrested in 1307. Hundreds of Templars were imprisoned and tried for heresy. Philip had the leaders burned at the stake in 1314. The order's fabulous wealth – the *true* target of the king's intrigues – was never recovered.

Templar lore is a jumble of history, halftruths, hunches, and fevered fantasies ranging from the plausible to the ridiculous. *Templar's Gold* assumes that some of this mythology is true and – in time-honored pulp fashion – invents some of its own. After all, as Umberto Eco observed, “The Templars have something to do with everything.”

REQUIRED BOOKS

GURPS Action Adventure 1: Templar's Gold is a **GURPS Action** adventure set in the pulpy goodness of TL6, not TL8. To run it, you need the **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Action 1: Heroes**, **GURPS Action 2: Exploits**, and *Pyramid* #3/8: *Cliffhangers* (which provides guidance for using **Action** in a pulp setting). **GURPS Cliffhangers** and **GURPS High-Tech**, while not required, are highly recommended – and groups seeking details on period firearms may find the **GURPS High-Tech: Pulp Guns** volumes useful.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

S.A. Fisher is from Arkansas, where he teaches military history. He is the author of **GURPS Action 7: Mercenaries**, **GURPS WWII: Dogfaces**, and **GURPS WWII: Hand of Steel**, and co-author of **GURPS High-Tech**, **GURPS Gun Fu**, and **GURPS Loadouts: Monster Hunters**. He has co-written two books – *Synthetics* and *Colony Builder* – for **HOSTILE**, Zozer Games' retro-industrial science-fiction roleplaying game.

Art Acknowledgments

P. 6: American National Red Cross photograph collection. *During their retreat, the Germans blew up the trees with dynamite.* France, 1919. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [loc.gov/item/2017669161](https://www.loc.gov/item/2017669161).

P. 10: Hine, Lewis Wickes, photographer. American National Red Cross photograph collection. *Paris. Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue has nothing on the Avenue de l'Opera and the vicinity, in Paris. The “doughboy” can be seen dodging traffic just opposite the Opera House.* Paris, France, 1919. [Photograph] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [loc.gov/item/2017666842](https://www.loc.gov/item/2017666842).

THE ADVENTURE

Set in 1919, in the aftermath of the Great War, the story begins as the heroes have a last visit with a dying friend. This

leads to fistfights, gunfights, several chases, and a final set-piece battle.

THE SETUP

The plot hinges on the actions of Samuel Moses Butler, a famous Black Parisian and war hero.

BLACK EAGLE

Samuel Moses Butler was born in Griffin, Georgia in 1891, the seventh son of a Black sharecropper and his Choctaw wife. Fleeing segregation, Butler jumped ship in Columbus, Georgia at age 13 and embarked on a life of adventure. Handsome and tall, he had a muscular physique and a majestic voice, and was already a skilled jazz and blues player. Butler also possessed a powerful mind; naturally curious and quick-witted, he proved to be gifted in mathematics and science.

Butler traveled the world for several years, eventually settling in Paris, where he learned French and undertook a classical education at an elite Paris academy. To pay the bills, he began boxing. He made a small fortune in public and

used his winnings to invest in several Parisian nightclubs and restaurants. An expert showman, Butler was one of the first jazz musicians in Paris, and took the city by storm with his performances.

When the Great War broke out in 1914, Butler joined the French Foreign Legion – the only option open to American volunteers – and fought with distinction. He eventually became an intelligence officer. Butler excelled at cryptographic work, and was an expert at breaking German “trench codes.”

Butler was badly wounded at the Somme in 1916. While recovering in Paris, he watched pilots-in-training with their flying machines. Exhausted from trench fighting and enamored with the chivalry of the “knights of the air,” he pulled strings to undergo flight training, and soon joined the Lafayette Flying Corps. Butler marked the fuselage of his biplane with a distinctive black eagle, and quickly racked up several aerial victories. The Black Eagle was the scourge of the skies!

ABOUT GURPS

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with #GURPShook on Twitter. Or explore that hashtag for ideas to add to your own game! The web page for **GURPS Action Adventure 1: Templar’s Gold** can be found at gurps.sjgames.com/actionadventure1.

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Bibliographies. Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We’ve added them to many **GURPS** book web pages with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at sjgames.com/errata/gurps.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

CHÂTEAU FLEURY DU MONT

Butler was wounded and shot down on January 4, 1918. He crash-landed his plane near the ruins of Château Fleury du Mont, several miles northeast of Verdun. He left his wrecked plane and sought shelter in the cellar of the abandoned château during a German artillery barrage. There, he stumbled upon an ancient passageway, recently revealed by the shelling. Strange symbols marked the keystone of the arch (see *The Templar Code*, below).

Butler followed the winding corridor and soon emerged into a cavernous antechamber. As heavy shellfire rumbled above, dust and debris fell from the ceiling. Butler swept the room with his flashlight, piles of gold and silver glittering around him. In the chamber's center stood a large golden cross inlaid with red enamel. Before Butler could explore his surroundings further, the ceiling began to cave in. He stuffed his pockets with what treasure he could and fled. As he staggered into the cellar, the passageway collapsed in a cloud of dust.

By the time Butler stumbled back to friendly lines, he was deathly sick and on the verge of collapse. As he convalesced in Paris over the next several months, he kept his discovery secret, but committed himself to unraveling the mystery of the treasure.

THE CURSE OF THE TEMPLARS

But Samuel Butler never recovered from his wounds. In taking the gold, he had invoked the Templar curse (below). Over the next year, he rarely left the hospital and his muscular

boxer's frame wasted to skeletal proportions. His eyes feverish and animated, he at times mumbled in his sleep about codes, knights, gold, and "the scarlet cross."

The curse itself was that of the dying words of Jacques de Molay, last grand master of the Templars. As he and his brother knights were burned, de Molay called down a malediction upon all who had conspired against the order. Within a short time, both the pope and the King of France had died. This curse, it seemed, applied to any who might steal the Templars' treasure.

THE CODEx DE MOLAY

Among the items Butler took from the treasure room was a small book. Though he cannot recall why he snatched it up, he became obsessed with it in the ensuing months. It proved to be the personal journal of the last grand master of the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon – the Templars.

The journal was a small, plain, black leather codex with 500 vellum pages, each plainly marked with mysterious symbols (see *The Templar Code*, above). As he was able, Butler made frequent research trips to the *Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne*, France's most extensive library. His research there, combined with his cryptographic skills, finally laid bare the text's secrets: The book plotted not only every Templar property, but also where and how the treasure was hidden; it detailed not just one king's ransom, but *hundreds* of them around the world.

Between fits of fever and delirium, Butler made a copy of the original journal and hid it for safekeeping. Close to acquiring the hidden hoard, he fell too sick to continue. Knowing his time was up, he ripped out critical pages and hid them with his most trusted friends.

THE TEMPLAR CURSE

De Molay's curse (above) is equivalent to Terminally Ill (Up to one year) (p. B158), which corresponds to the "year and a day" malediction he called down upon his enemies. If the PCs secure the treasure at Château Fleury du Mont, they'll suffer the same end as Butler: death in a year and a day. To alleviate the curse, they must perform some act of contrition or atonement – e.g., great charity, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or the construction of a hospital or orphanage – as laid out in de Molay's journal (see *The Codex de Molay*, below).

THE TEMPLAR CODE

Butler has decrypted the "Templar Code," a formidable cipher. If the heroes try to decipher other pages of de Molay's journal independently, roll a Quick Contest of **Cryptography** skill (p. B186) against the original Templar codemaker's skill 20. Each attempt takes one day. This process must be repeated for *each page* in the journal, as each one uses a different cipher!

After each page is deciphered, it has to be translated from Latin, and then the text carefully researched (rolling vs. **Research**) to make any sense of its content. This process takes 1d *days*. BAD is -5, making an extensive library (+3) helpful.

The GM might consider presenting the *players* with a simple Playfair or pigpen cipher as a handout (along with the key, of course!).

THE CALL

As the adventure opens, the heroes each receive an envelope in the mail. There's no return address and no letter – only a small sheet of vellum with strange symbols on it (see *The Codex de Molay*, above). A few days later, each receives a telegram calling them to Samuel Butler's deathbed. They may arrive individually or in a group, entering a posh townhouse on the Seine. There, Armand Martin, Butler's elderly French valet, leads the PCs to Butler's bedroom.

The heroes should be shocked by Butler's emaciated condition. After exchanging pleasantries, Butler relates what he saw near Verdun and what he has discovered from the journal. He doesn't know the name of the château or its exact location. He whispers "Black Eagle" in a conspiratorial tone, and then give his visitors a knowing look. This proves to be the final meeting, as Butler dies the next day, on January 5, 1919 – exactly a year and a day after taking the journal. It's up to the PCs to finish his quest for Templar gold.

THE BAPHOMET

Butler's words to the heroes include a warning that "evil forces" have stalked him since he discovered the treasure. He calls this menace "Baphomet," based on his reading of de Molay's journal.

In 1307 and the years following, some Templars confessed under torture to a litany of church crimes, including charges of heresy, desecration of religious icons, and various forms of sexual depravity. The most shocking revelation was that the Templars worshiped not Christ, but an “idol” they called Baphomet. These charges brought about the order’s destruction.

While the Baphomet associated with the Templar confessions was thought to be a skull or head worshiped by all Templars in their gatherings, Baphomet was actually a

secretive and dangerous cult of pseudo-Templars hidden within the order. Jaded and cynical, this heretical subgroup operated to sow confusion, disruption, and disunity across the Mediterranean. They cooperated among themselves to acquire power and riches, subverting efforts at peace and playing all sides against each other from the safety of Templar strongholds.

Few Templars other than the grand master and his closest associates knew of Baphomet’s existence. When the Inquisition tortured them, they tried to save themselves by informing on the activities of Baphomet. The interrogators used these “confessions” to implicate the entire Templar order.

By the time of the Great War, the Baphomet has evolved into a jumble of well-placed aristocrats, academics, and occultists, all secretly connected to a network of criminals, terrorists, radicals, and anarchists. The group is searching for Templar gold to fund their madness.

*The Templars have something
to do with everything.*
– Umberto Eco

THE CHARACTERS

The PCs should plausibly be close friends of Samuel Butler. His epic, world-hopping background makes a wide variety of acquaintances possible.

LENSES AND TEMPLATES

The lenses and templates most appropriate to the pulp era are discussed in “Pulp Action!” (*Pyramid* #3/8: *Cliffhangers*, pp. 4-10). That advice is suitable for *Templar’s Gold*, with these additions:

Criminal Lens: Butler spent plenty of time in the French jazz scene, playing the piano and saxophone at both glitzy and seedy nightclubs. He also fought in sanctioned and non-sanctioned boxing matches. He could have rubbed elbows with all types of criminals, but perhaps he befriended *Le Milieu*: the wealthy and connected French (especially Corsican) underworld, where the face man, investigator, shooter, and wheel man templates are most apt.

Law Enforcement Lens: This could represent any of the Paris police officers (of the *Sûreté nationale*), members of the *Gendarmerie nationale*, and even private detectives (French or American) that Butler might have befriended at various times. Investigators and infiltrators make the most sense here, though an affable and charismatic face man could work.

Military Lens: This represents not only French aviators or soldiers, but also men of almost any nationality that served in the French Foreign Legion or the Lafayette Flying Corps. These are shooters and wheel men (a.k.a. “stickmen” or “knights of the air”). However, a military intelligence investigator or military medic could be helpful.

Other Lenses and Templates: *GURPS Action 1: Heroes*, p. 5 offers several lenses and character-customization tips that are especially suitable for pulp-era gaming; academic, athlete, journalist, and rich adventurer all fit perfectly. *GURPS Action 3: Furious Fists* is chock-full of appropriate two-fisted (and

two-footed) archetypes. “Extended Action!” (*Pyramid* #3/53: *Action*, pp. 9-14) covers horseman (and horse chases!), which would be helpful to equestrian adventurers. *GURPS Action 4: Specialists* provides an alternative character-creation framework that works well for pulp-era heroes, as long as the chosen skill sets steer away from TL7+ technology – and “More Skill Sets for Specialists” (*Pyramid* #3/112: *Action II*, pp. 4-10) expands on this with fitting packages like dilettante/heir, professor, and creative, the last of which includes helpful notes for creating Hemingwayesque characters.

Other Sources: While the *Action* series provides 250-point cinematic action templates appropriate to tales of derring-do, it also includes guidance for building PCs from scratch (*Heroes*, pp. 17-23). With that in mind, another valuable source is *GURPS Steampunk 3: Soldiers and Scientists*, which offers templates and a load of helpful advice on making characters appropriate to the WWI era, including the adventurer-journalist, aviator-pilot, explorer, and servant. These templates are all worth 150 points or less, so boost the power level accordingly, cribbing *Action* templates as appropriate.

PULLING RANK

Many lenses and templates in *Action* include Rank that heroes can exploit to call for aid such as backup and research facilities (*Heroes*, pp. 24-25). But as *Pyramid* #3/8: *Cliffhangers*, p. 10 explains, the assistance available in the pulp era differs considerably from that of TL8.

GURPS Social Engineering: Pulling Rank provides more details on this topic, which GMs of pulp games may find helpful. It greatly expands the range of what Assistance Rolls can bring to bear, and elaborates on how certain types of aid vary by TL. It also suggests additional Rank types – for instance, Organized Crime Rank suitable for “made men” in criminal empires like *Le Milieu* – and describes how Rank relates to Patron.

ZONE ROUGE

The *Zone Rouge* ("Red Zone") is a hellscape of muddy fields, unexploded ordnance, rusting barbed-wire entanglements, and partially collapsed trenchworks.

VISITING THE ZONE

The Red Zone extends in a rough crescent shape from Nancy in the south, then west to Soissons, Amiens, and Arras, and finally east to Lille and the Belgian border in the north, encompassing in total some 460 square miles.

In early 1919, Verdun, Amiens, and Arras are still almost wholly bombed out, with perhaps three-quarters of the homes destroyed. Populations in the major cities are half their pre-war levels. Dozens of little farming villages have ceased to exist, shelled into oblivion by four years of war.

Food and shelter are in short supply, and transportation is difficult. Acquiring the basics in the region should require

Social Engineering (**GURPS Action 2: Exploits**, pp. 15-17). All prices below are in generic **GURPS** \$.

Transportation

Assuming the party is in Paris at the outset, the principal passenger rails run from Paris to Reims to Verdun (160 miles), which takes eight hours – usually a noon train Paris-to-Reims and then a morning train Reims-to-Verdun. The fare is about \$25 for each leg.

Road networks in the *Zone Rouge* range from cobblestone pavers inside the cities not destroyed by the war, to barely passable elsewhere (Bad or Very Bad terrain; p. B351). Make a daily HT roll for vehicle breakdowns (see *Slime, Sand, and Equipment Failure*, p. B485); use the stats for the TL6 sedan on p. B464. Car rental is \$100/day; bicycle rental, \$5/day.



The quickest method to Verdun is by air, renting a plane in Paris and flying the 140 miles, point-to-point, to Verdun; this takes about two hours. Biplane rides can be negotiated for very little if the pilot is game for a flight. Converted twin-engine Handley-Page bombers, with 14 passengers aboard, fly the route for tourists at \$750 roundtrip.

Food and Housing

Stalwart travelers in the region must contend with high prices and primitive conditions. Nevertheless, some residents rent rooms to the mobs of curious tourists or affluent travelers. A few hotels are in operation, though many are partially destroyed. Rooms cost from \$100 to \$200 a night; meals, from \$25 to \$100.

*These are the picked troops
of God, whom he has recruited
from the ends of the earth . . .
each man sword in hand, and
superbly trained to war.*

– Bernard of Clairvaux

HAZARDS

Work crews are clearing roads and paths throughout the *Zone Rouge*, but the battlefields remain a perilous wilderness. Erupted fields abound in a moonscape devoid of grass and trees – a land of mud, shell holes, trenches, charred stumps

and trunks of trees, and the occasional jagged remains of a house, village, or town. Scattered among it all are the rotting remains of humans, horses, and mules in the millions. Unexploded high-explosive shells and gas bombs are so thick in the ground that farmers refer to them as the “iron harvest” during plowing season. Some detonate at the slightest disturbance, even from rain.

Each day the heroes stray off the beaten path, the GM should determine what hazards they face by rolling 2d for each PC:

- 2 – Explosives.** The hero encounters an unexploded shell or mine. See *Explosive Booby Traps and Mines* (**Exploits**, p. 23).
- 3-4 – Corpse.** An encounter with a putrid rotting corpse; e.g., stepping through a partially exposed ribcage. Roll vs. Dodge to sidestep this. Failure means an immediate HT roll to avoid infection (p. B444).
- 5-7 – Collapsed Trench or Shell Hole.** A sinkhole 1d yards deep opens suddenly. The victim must roll vs. Dodge to avoid falling in and suffering damage (**Exploits**, p. 19). Also roll 1d: a 6 indicates the hole contains *other* hazards – roll on this table again!
- 8-9 – Barbed-Wire Obstacle.** The hero stumbles upon rusted barbed wire. See *Razor Wire* (**Exploits**, p. 20). If injured, make an immediate HT+3 roll to avoid infection (p. B444). If more than one PC gets this result, an immense apron of wire blocks the way for everyone!
- 10-11 – Tainted Water.** The hero happens upon a ghastly, disease-ridden pool or stream. Treat as **3-4**. If several PCs get this result, the stream obstructs everybody's path!
- 12 – Gas Bomb.** As **2**, except the danger is exposure to mustard gas (p. B439).

A *Per*-based **Soldier** roll, at BAD -3, helps avoid the hazards in the *Zone Rouge*. If veteran soldiers provide guidance to clueless civilians, use *Got You Covered* (**Exploits**, p. 5).

EVENTS

The adventure begins at Butler's funeral. From there, the heroes are racing against the Baphomet (pp. 4-5).

Many of these events are set in Paris. For more about period Paris, see “City of Lights, City of Blackouts” (*Pyramid* #3/117: *Hot Spots*, pp. 4-16).

BUTLER'S FUNERAL

The funeral is a Catholic Mass in a small chapel near the Seine. Some 1d Baphomet mooks – dressed in rough workmen's clothes or lower-class suits – show up, casing the crowd for the heroes (*Spotting Trouble*, **Exploits**, p. 28). They'll tail the group to their hotel. If someone notices, the mooks will run, making for a foot chase through crowded Parisian streets; see *Chases* (**Exploits**, pp. 31-35).

BAPHOMET

If the heroes nab a mook and successfully interrogate him (**Exploits**, pp. 16-17), he'll reveal that the Baphomet are looking for a “treasure map.” A successful IQ roll by one

of the team recalls the pages they received. Someone may bring up that Butler said “Black Eagle” at their last meeting, after which some checking directs the group to the Paris-Le Bourget Aerodrome, Hangar 7.

PARIS-LE BOURGET AERODROME

When the PCs arrive and survey the surroundings, roll vs. Perception or **Observation**. Success allows an **Intelligence Analysis** roll to realize that the strange symbols on the pages they received in the mail are breadcrumbs leading to Hangar 7 and Butler's war-surplus two-seat biplane. The symbols are bright red and in plain view, the final one painted on the plane's upper wing. This is visible only from a vantage point *above* the aircraft, on the catwalk in the hangar.

Butler has hidden de Molay's journal in a drawer under the pilot's seat. This is locked. **Lockpicking** will be handy!

No special roll is needed to notice two trucks with 2d mooks nearby . . .

The Templars loved codes, thrived on ciphers, and delighted in symbolism and allegory.

– P.A. Fanthorpe, R. Lionel Fanthorpe, and R. Reginald,
***The Holy Grail Revealed:
The Real Secret of Rennes-le-Château***

FIREFIGHT AT THE HANGAR

Soon the mooks move in, threatening the heroes with revolvers. This could erupt into a fistfight or a firefight; the thugs will ineptly oblige either. If the PCs think of it, they'll find the observer's machine gun (use the LMG on p. B281) on the Black Eagle loaded – they can climb in and turn it on the mooks!

If more than half of the goons are put out of action or driven off, their leader will flee to a nearby biplane and try to escape (he and his backseater both have Piloting-13 and Gunner-13). If the PCs notice, they may follow in the two-seat Black Eagle for another chase scene. A couple more two-seaters are ready for flight near the hangar, so additional team members can join in the chase, though they'll be restricted to using handheld weapons or simply following the mook to his destination. For vehicle stats, use the TL6 biplane on p. B465.

the local gendarmes will arrive to arrest the PCs. A successful IQ, **Strategy**, or **Tactics** roll before landing will reveal that the wisest course is to return to Paris to use *Gathering Intelligence* and *Social Engineering* (**Exploits**, pp. 11-17) to uncover more details about the château and its owner.

BACK IN PARIS

Once the team gathers intelligence on Château Marie and its owner, they should make rolls (at BAD -2) to discover four pieces of information:

1. Who Professor Graf is (see above).
2. The existence, name, and location of Graf's bookshop.
3. Graf's involvement with criminal elements.
4. After learning all of the above: Graf's involvement in an ancient cult (Baphomet).

Methods are left to the heroes: *Interviews* (**Exploits**, p. 16), *Files and Records* (**Exploits**, p. 14), suitable Assistance Rolls (**Heroes**, pp. 24-25), etc. The GM should make this discovery exciting; see *How to Game Fact-Finding* (**Exploits**, p. 17).

THE BOOKSHOP

If the heroes case Librairie Ancienne Île-de-France – Graf's bookshop, a few blocks from the Eiffel Tower – Graf eventually appears in a chauffeured sedan and enters the shop. Soon after, some Baphomet mooks turn up and go in. If the PCs enter in disguise or find a way to observe the shop's interior, they'll witness Graf receiving a small journal; this is the copy Butler kept in his home. If approached, Graf is polite but aloof, assuring anyone who asks that he's just a bookseller – though Templar relics and artifacts adorn the shop's walls and bookcases. If pressed about the mooks, he'll say only that Paris is a dangerous place and that the questioner should be careful, too.

PROFESSOR WOLFGANG GRAF

Successful information-gathering (see *Back in Paris*, below) reveals that Graf is a minor French-German aristocrat from Alsace-Lorraine and a former professor of medieval history at the Sorbonne. Excellent results discover that he has been involved in the theft of art objects and antiquities in several countries, which resulted in his resignation from the Sorbonne. Investigators may also learn that he owns an antique bookshop, Librairie Ancienne Île-de-France.

Graf is a key member of the Baphomet, and has been researching the de Molay codex for years. He happened to stumble upon Butler at the *Bibliothèque de la Sorbonne*, and put two-and-two together after noticing familiar symbols in Butler's notes. His mooks tossed Butler's place but failed to find the journal, causing Butler to send key pages to his friends. Graf believes that Butler was researching the Templar gold, but doesn't yet know about Château Fleury du Mont.

For Graf's statistics, use the investigator template with the criminal lens. The Baphomet counts as a criminal Contact Group with effective skill 18.

CHÂTEAU MARIE DE GRAF

The fleeing henchman will attempt to fly to the estate of Professor Wolfgang Graf (above): Château Marie de Graf, a few miles south of Paris. The mook will land on the sprawling green lawn. If the heroes land and give chase, they'll meet *another* 2d mooks, armed with rifles – and in minutes,

ARMAND

Heroes who case the bookshop will discover that Samuel Butler's elderly servant, Armand Martin, is a frequent customer. Confronted about this, Armand will reveal that weeks ago, some "Apaches" (p. 9) bribed him to spy on Butler.

He also stole the journal in Butler's possession, just before Butler's death. He can confirm that he saw a man matching Graf's description conversing with the street toughs. And that's all he knows.

While harmless, Armand has made a tidy sum spying on Butler for the Baphomet. He took the money only because he's aging and destitute. The GM may consider using Armand as a red herring, having him act suspicious, attempting to flee the city, and so forth.

READING THE JOURNAL

When the heroes get around to reading de Molay's journal, they'll first have to decipher it (*The Templar Code*, p. 4). After that, it's a matter of poring over and understanding the text; see *Files and Records (Exploits*, p. 14), noting the section on quick searches if the readers are in a hurry. Success reveals the location of Château Fleury du Mont and the treasure located there.

THE PLAN

Once the team has gathered all the information, they must formulate a plan, rolling against **Tactics** at BAD -2. Failure sends them to Château Marie de Graf (p. 8), where Graf has the home-field advantage, including being on friendly terms with the local gendarmes. Success directs them to Château Fleury du Mont and the treasure; see *Zone Rouge* (pp. 6-7) for details. The heroes will need all of their skills and resources to accumulate weapons and adventuring gear – and a crate of dynamite to blow open the passage and recover the treasure.

TRAIN TO VERDUN

If the team takes the train to Verdun, then a couple of hours into the journey, 1d Baphomet mooks will jump one of the heroes in an attempt to kidnap and interrogate them. The ensuing clash involves simple fisticuffs, with the mooks being thrown off the train for causing a ruckus if they lose.

If the PCs defeat the mooks too easily, have a biplane attack their railcar! It flies slowly alongside the train until parallel with them, and then the rear gunner turns his LMG on the car from just a few yards away. Reckless adventurers might try to leap aboard the plane, dodging as they wing-walk and finally commandeer the plane (at BAD -3). Optionally, the aircraft could attack the *locomotive* (use the stats on p. B464) to delay the party.

VERDUN

At Verdun, the group will need to hire cars to take them to Château Fleury du Mont. A few miles from their destination, the road becomes impassable due to mud and debris. Thus, the heroes must hike through the war-torn landscape, which could take several hours (roll for *Hazards*, p. 7).

Shortly after the PCs start their hike, 3d Baphomet thugs with rifles and revolvers arrive in three 2 1/2-ton trucks (p. B464), having followed the group from Verdun. The mooks will destroy the heroes' hired cars and then deploy

Apaches and the Baphomet

Turn-of-the-century Paris was gripped in a wave of street crime carried out by youths known as "Apaches" after a slur in the French press, intended to suggest their violence and ruthlessness. Apaches typically wear distinctive red waist sashes, and carry pistols, brass knuckles, and daggers. They specialize in group muggings, beating and stabbing several victims at once and taking all of their valuables. As Baphomet muscle, add war-surplus rifles and even the occasional light machine gun to their weaponry – many of them are war veterans.

into the wastes after the party, with Graf in the lead, dressed in a deerstalker cap and armed with a sporting rifle. Additionally, two biplanes will patrol the area. If they spot the PCs, they'll first drop flares on the site to indicate the party's location. Next, they'll bomb the group (the bombs do 6d×3 [4d] cr ex) or strafe them (again, use the LMG, p. B281). A successful **Tactics** roll directs the team to the château for safety and a defensive strongpoint, which they should reach just ahead of the mooks.

RETURN TO CHÂTEAU FLEURY DU MONT

The château is a partially ruined structure some 50 yards square. The walls are thick (DR 156, HP 94). Enough of the walls and floors remain to provide few perches on the second and third floors. There are dozens of well-protected firing positions at ground level, and the partial basement offers plenty of overhead cover.

THE BATTLE

Graf and his mooks will approach carefully – despite enjoying the benefits of numbers and air support – because the heroes have plenty of excellent cover from which to fight. The Baphomet forces won't foolishly rush the PCs; instead, they'll try the flanks or use a pincer attack. If their numbers dwindle to 10 or fewer, a distant rumbling will signal the approach of a single light tank. It and the transport truck that brought it have been raided from the Army park in Verdun and directed to the château by the aerial flares.

The light tank has ST/HP 100, effective Move 0.5 on this terrain, DR 50 on the front, and DR 25 elsewhere. The driver sits in the body, while the gunner in the one-man turret fires a LMG (p. B281) with 500 rounds of ammo.

If the heroes have dynamite, a five-pound bundle (6d×5) will take out the tank treads – light the fuse and throw! A grenade tossed into a carelessly open hatch (of course it is!) will also work. The GM might let the PCs scrounge discarded grenades from the château ruins.

If the heroes defeat the tank and/or more than half of the mooks, Graf will withdraw and try to ambush the group on their way out to the road. Worse losses will force a full retreat to Verdun. Graf is an ambitious madman, but not a fool.

THE TREASURE

Assuming the heroes win the battle, they'll need to use their remaining dynamite to blow open the passageway in the cellar (*Blowing Stuff Up*, **Exploits**, p. 24). After the dust clears, they must crawl through the passage on hands and knees to reach the now half-collapsed treasure room. It would take days if not weeks of digging – and probably more explosives – to get to the motherlode. However, the immediately accessible treasure amounts to approximately 125 pounds of silver (\$125,000) and 100 pounds of gold (\$2 million); see *Gold and Silver*, p. B515. A king's ransom indeed!

As the treasure is collected, the room's ceiling becomes increasingly unstable. A successful **Architecture**, **Geology**, or **Prospecting** roll – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – warns that collapse is imminent. Stubborn or greedy treasure-hunters risk having the whole manor fall on their heads (see **GURPS Action 5: Dictionary of Danger**, pp. 7, 30). More prudent adventurers will grab what they can and hoof it, which means hiking back through the battlefield to the road, where *perhaps* the Baphomet's trucks remain, and then driving back to Verdun.

AFTERMATH

After the party returns to Paris, the GM should wrap up the scenario (**Exploits**, pp. 46-47). The group may decide to work together as freelancers, pursuing the other Templar treasure locations together. Those with Rank might be ordered to dispatch the Baphomet.

The party should have no problem selling off the treasure, whether as antiques or as bullion. Assuming they split the prize into equal shares, each adventurer could justify becoming Very Wealthy, if they take the time and effort to invest

their loot in stocks, bonds, real estate, etc. A kind GM might even grant the advantage in full as a reward.

However, if anyone in the party further deciphers the journal, they'll soon discover the key element that Butler missed – the Templar curse (p. 4)! If each hero gives up half of their newfound wealth to what is, in the GM's opinion, a good cause, they'll escape the curse. Otherwise, they had better spend their loot before their mortal shell is stricken down!



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